DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 443 813 SP 039 371

AUTHOR Silva, Diane Yendol
TITLE The Meaning of Supervision for Mentor Teachers.
PUB DATE 2000-04-00
NOTE 27p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 24-28, 2000). For a related document from this author, see SP 039 370.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Field Experience Programs; Higher Education; Inquiry; Internship Programs; *Mentors; Preservice Teacher Education; Professional Development Schools; Student Teachers; *Supervision

ABSTRACT

These studies explore two mentor teachers' practice of supervision in a Professional Development School (PDS) setting and the meaning that these two mentors attach to their own work as mentors of prospective teachers. Through prolonged participant observation and in-depth interviewing of both interns and mentors, this study captures the unfolding story of the two mentors' approaches to supervision over the course of the year-long internship experience. Each of the two mentors conceptualized and carried out her supervisory role differently, though both mentors approached the task of teaching the interns in a manner similar to their approach to teaching children. In analyzing these two mentors' supervision work, Bridgett takes on an artistic approach to mentoring, like that of a gardener while Claudia illustrates the inquiry-oriented approach to mentoring like that of a playwright. As a result of these cases, seven powerful features of mentoring emerge which contribute to the literature characterizing the supervision of effective teachers. (Author/SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 443 813

THE MEANING OF SUPERVISION FOR MENTOR TEACHERS

Diane Yendol Silva

The Pennsylvania State University

Paper Presented at the
American Educational Research Organization

New Orleans
April, 2000

D.Y. Silva

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SP039371

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ABSTRACT

These studies explore two mentor teachers' practice of supervision in a PDS setting and the meaning that these two mentors attach to their own work as mentors of prospective teachers. Through prolonged participant observation and in-depth interviewing of both interns and mentors, this study captured the unfolding story of two mentors' approaches to supervision over the course of the year-long internship experience. Each of the two mentors conceptualizes and carries out their supervisory role differently though both mentors approached the task of teaching their intern in a manner similar to their approach to teaching children. In analyzing these two mentors' supervision work , the first case represents Bridgett's artistic approach to mentoring drawing on the metaphor of a gardener and the second case, Claudia, illustrates and inquiry-oriented approach to mentoring using the metaphor of a playwright. As a result of these cases, seven powerful features of mentoring emerged which contribute to the literature characterizing the supervision of effective mentors.

BRIDGETT'S USE OF MENTORING SPACES: CREATING A CONTEXT FOR LEARNING TO TEACH

(PART ONE)

A great deal of attention from the academy as well as the political arena has been given to the mentoring of novice teachers during the last two decades. Arising from the literature are conceptions of mentors as experienced practitioners guiding the development of an inexperienced one (Goldsberry 1998) and a view of mentoring as assisted performance which entails the mentor teacher supporting and guiding the mentee as they jointly work on authentic teaching tasks (Feiman-Nemser and Beasley, 1996). Zimpher and Grossman (1992) focus on both skill and affect as they conceive a mentor as "a master of the craft of teaching and personable in dealing with other teachers; an empathetic individual who understands the need for a mentorship role" (p.145). The current political climate is also ripe for conversations about mentoring and study of mentoring practices. The *Seven Priorities of the U.S. Department of Education* (1997) calls for special mentoring efforts designed to retain beginning teachers in their first few years of their professional career. Additionally, over 30 states have now mandated some type of support for mentoring beginning teachers.

Emerging from these conversations are metaphors that elicit alternative conceptions of mentoring. For example, Schien (1978) describes a mentor as a coach, positive role model, developer of talent, opener of doors, protector, and sponsor. Galvez-Hjornevik (1986) suggests that a mentor is a trusted guide, counselor, or teacher-guardian. Additionally, Borko (1986) outlines the role of a mentor as a colleague teacher, helping teacher, peer teacher, and support teacher. These existing definitions of mentoring are ambiguous and do not offer much guidance in defining and knowing the work of a mentor. More recently, efforts are being made to define characteristics of productive mentor/novice relationships (Odell, 1990; Zimpher and Rieger, 1988) and others have described specific practices of mentors (Feiman-Nemser, 1992) or

articulated what should be included in preparing mentors (Odell, 1990). Drawing on the work of the last two decades, Odell and Huling (2000) suggest that:

> Mentoring can be viewed productively as a professional practice that occurs in the context of teaching whenever an experienced teacher supports, challenges, and guides novice teachers in their teaching practice (xii).

The mentoring literature originally characterized the work done to enhance the success and professional development of teachers during the first three years of their teaching career. However, in the last decade more attention has focused on cooperating teachers who work with student teachers. These teachers also assume the role of mentor and reconceptualize their roles by assuming increased responsibility for prospective teacher growth. Since cooperating teachers have been shown to have significant influence over the development of prospective teachers (Guyton, and McIntyre, 1990; McIntyre, Bryd, and Foxx, 1996) an understanding of how effective mentors shape and give meaning to their own mentoring practices could well augment the existing literature. What has been missing from the literature are the voices of mentor teachers who when given the space, authority, and encouragement construct their own work with prospective teachers and assume new roles. What is the meaning of supervision to these mentor teachers? How do they conceive school-based teacher education? And what do they believe is effective mentoring?

Research Methodology

Teacher stories provide a powerful tool for sense-making and sharing. Barone (1998) concludes that to date, "the notion of story has rarely been related to the field of supervision

within empirical research" (p. 1109). This study of mentoring practices is interpretive (Erickson, 1986) in nature and draws on case study methodology (Stake, 1995) informed by both ethnographic (Wolcott, 1994) and phenomenological (Denzin, 1989) lenses. Ultimately, the study stories the unfolding work of this mentor teacher.

This methodology focuses the spotlight on the ways a mentor teacher comes to know and carry out her work with a prospective teacher over an eighteen month period. The unit of analysis was a mentor teacher who was selected from a pool of six closely studied mentors using a unique case selection procedure (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984). In this case, the unique attributes included: 1) the mentor's willingness to actively engage in creating an inquiry focused year-long internship and 2) the intern/mentor dyad's negotiation of a successful learning context as perceived by intern, mentor, and university faculty. After a six month period, the pool of mentors studied narrowed based on this selection criteria resulting in the following case of "Brigett."

The techniques used to enhance the quality of the analysis and ensure trustworthiness of the study include source triangulation, method triangulation, theoretical triangulation, and member checks. Source triangulation required "checking out the consistency of different sources within the same method" (Patton, 1990, p.464). Method triangulation relied on "checking out the consistency of findings generated by different data-collection methods" (Patton, 1990, p. 464). The data sources used in this analysis included: 1) journal entries written by mentors and interns, 2) fieldnotes, 3) interviews, 4) e-mail, 5) meeting minutes, and 6) observation sheets. Theoretical triangulation occurred as the data was analyzed using both ethnographic and phenomenological lenses (Patton, 1990). Finally, periodic member checks with the mentors,

interns, the principal, and other university faculty were also a part of the analysis. The mentor participated in three semi-structured interviews focused on her experiences working as a mentor. Her intern participated in on-going informal weekly discussions with the researcher and engaged in a single semi-structured interview near the end of the school year. The tape recordings of each interview were transcribed, allowing for accurate reporting of the participant's responses and enabling the researcher to interpret specific responses in the context of the entire transcript. The typical length of the responses was in the form of many paragraphs.

After reviewing the data set multiple times utilizing Wolcott's (1994) methodological structure of description, analysis, and interpretation, a cycle emerged within each case that depicted the teacher's work. As the cycles emerged, systematic searches of the data for disconfirming and confirming evidence were conducted (Erickson, 1986). The remaining sections of this paper present an analysis and interpretation of Bridgett's mentoring. As will be demonstrated, Bridgett uses a cycle of spaces to facilitate her intern's growth.

Bridgett's Cycle of Mentoring Spaces

Bridgett's supervision work is much like the work of a gardener. She plans, plots, and creates many types of "spaces" for Angela to learn and grow in throughout her internship year. Oberg (1989) discusses this concept of "space" as one of five key elements of the creative act of supervision. Oberg's work which typically focuses on university faculty or principals as supervisors defines the important function of space as "times and places for teachers to contemplate what it means to be educators in their situations" (p. 63). As a mentor, Bridgett believes many types of spaces should be cultivated to help Angela contemplate her work as a

teacher. These spaces, created in a developmentally sensitive way, provide the psychic space where prospective teacher growth and reflection can occur. Oberg's description of psychic space is present in each space Bridgett creates:

> More crucial than the physical space and time for reflection is the psychic space where it can happen. Teachers who feel that a supervisor knows better than they themselves do what they should be doing or who feel they will be held to behavioral specifications of their jobs are not likely to ask the kinds of penetrating questions that reach down to the very ground of their practice. Common sense attests to the superior persuasive power of a feeling of self-confidence, which is stimulated by due measures of trust and respect. The tone that invites teachers to enter into a reflective space is a discriminating respect balancing appreciation for the already-developed with positive expectations for the not-yet-developed. (Oberg, 1989, p. 64)

Bridgett creates five different spaces that encourage this type of self-confidence and growth in her intern, Angela. These spaces include: space to be, space to explore, space to raise questions, space to improve, and space to celebrate. Although Angela cycles through each of these spaces throughout the year, as Angela reaches different benchmarks and experiments with different tasks the spaces offer new challenges.

> I really think the way we work changes dramatically as Angela gains more experiences... I feel like I have been pretty directive in identifying what she tries but I am now trying to provide more choices and options now. (Bridgett, interview A, 284-289)

As Bridgett continues working with Angela, she provides Angela choices, new opportunities, and space to become a teacher.

Space to Be

Bridgett begins by providing Angela with the *space to be* a teacher and sees her own role as someone who nurtures that feeling or way of being. She believes that feeling like a teacher is the first step to being a teacher and she offers this advice:

> Do whatever you can to make sure that everything is offered to the intern and do whatever you can to make that person successful. (Bridgett, interview B, 201-202)
>
> Initially I feel like I am there to make it as successful an experience as possible. I think that they need to feel like they can grow and stretch and that they aren't always questioning themselves in the beginning. I like for the intern to have as much opportunity to feel like a teacher and work with children more informally to get their comfort level as a teacher. (Bridgett, interview B, 203-207)

Bridgett offers the idea of "feeling like a teacher" or "being a teacher" as a necessary first space to provide an intern. By providing the space for Angela to be and feel like a teacher, Bridgett encourages Angela to develop a professional stance targeted at learning about her own practice rather than assuming the role of a student who will be taught by others. Bridgett's focus on providing Angela a "space to be a teacher" shares commonalities with Costa and Garmston (1994) emphasis on teacher efficacy as a condition for learning. Efficacy is believing one can make a difference, being willing to make a difference, and actually being successful in attempts to make a difference. In addition, Garmston, Lipton, and Kaiser (1998) offer:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

> Persons with robust efficacy, however, are likely to expend more energy in their work, persevere longer, set more challenging goals, and continue in the face of barriers or failure. Efficacious people regard events as opportunities for learning, believe that personal action produces outcomes, control performance anxiety by accessing personal resources, and recognize what is not known by the self and seek to learn. They are self-modifying. (p.266)

Bridgett's focus on helping Angela gain this sense of efficacy early in the internship is a central feature in building Angela's capacity as a learner and Bridgett believes feeling like a teacher is the keystone space to intern growth.

Space to Explore

Bridgett also provides Angela with a *space to explore* as a vehicle for learning to teach. Angela's exploration takes two forms, observational exploration of others and exploring her own teaching by doing. Although Bridgett rarely intentionally models for Angela, Angela describes how she learns just by sharing Bridgett's classroom during the first half of the school year:

> I learned a lot from her modeling. I would observe, try, think about it, try, observe, reflect. We did a lot of talking about things I observed. (Angela, interview, 104-106).

Because Angela was able to learn through her own experiences teaching as well as observing Bridgett's teaching, the *space to explore* became a two faceted mentoring tool.

Bridgett also highlights the importance of a mentor being flexible and helping to provide the intern with *space to explore* her own teaching rather than assuming the style of the mentor:

> I think you need to be flexible because there is no guarantee that the intern you have will be a perfect match personality-wise, style-wise, and you need to be able to let that intern develop her own strengths and not have to fit into your mold. So I can't think of anything more important than that because being a mentor teacher means that you are there to try and make sure this is as successful as possible and let her grow and stretch as much as she possibly can. (Bridgett, interview A, 332-338)

Angela also talks about the freedom and space that Bridgett gives her to learn through exploration.

> She gives me a lot of room to explore and figure things out on my own… She has given me the freedom that I wanted and I have been able to go in directions I have wanted. Much like she is with her students. She leaves lots of room to take risks and fail and I know she is going to be there for me no matter what, if it is a flop or not. (Angela, interview, 18 and 25-28)

The *space to explore* encourages Angela to take risks as she grows and learns about herself as a teacher.

Bridgett describes the time it took to develop a relationship with Angela where Angela felt the freedom to explore and try new things:

> I think that it took Angela a long time to feel comfortable to explore in the classroom. I can tell she is one of those very obedient children who has probably done what her parents have expected her to do…It took a while for her to share her opinions, even her sense of humor. But I don't think of this as horribly

> negative, it is just adjusting to each other's personalities and that I wanted her to start to give me more ideas. (Bridgett, interview B, 441-449)

The importance of creating a context for risk-taking is a key component of Bridgett's mentoring and is also an element discussed in the PDS literature. Willingness to engage in risk taking is a prerequisite for teacher change in the professional development school. Hall (1996) in her study of the Indiana State Professional Development School identified risk-taking as a theme that became part of the value and belief system in the culture of the schools. In fact, one site reported that change became a way of life for the faculty and most sites indicated a culture of risk taking emerged. As the year progressed, Bridgett was able to draw Angela out and provide her with the space to explore and try new ideas:

> So when I asked her what she was thinking about doing for social studies, Angela said well how about if I use the pen pal exchange. Then I suggested that maybe we could add a foreign exchange puppet and Angela picked up on it and is constantly infusing things that we have started with her ideas. I am hoping it continues to go this way. (Bridgett, interview A, 318-323)

Bridgett continues this emphasis on learning by doing in the following excerpt:

> Understanding that people learn best by doing- No matter what the age of the student, having the actual experience facilitates the best and longest lasting learning. (Bridgett, Journal, 5/99)

Space to Raise Questions

As Bridgett listens carefully to Angela, she hears two types of questions, instructional and philosophical. The most frequently posed questions are instructional. These tend to center

around when and how Angela should implement an activity. In the beginning of the year, these instructional questions were raised by Bridgett as a way of modeling question raising as professional protocol. However, as the year progressed and Angela began assuming more responsibilities, Angela began initiating more of these questions. These questions often centered on timing, materials, and types of activities she was considering in her planning.

Interestingly, throughout the first half of the internship Bridgett and Angela did not frequently engage in co-reflection on questions of practice. Bridgett and Angela believe this was partially due to each individual's quiet personality. By the second half of the year, Angela and Bridgett used the space of the triad journal (Silva & Dana, 2000) for Angela in her quiet way to pose questions and engage in discussion that made Bridgett privy to her thinking. This triad journal was an outgrowth of the traditional supervisor and student teacher journal assignment used at the university. However, the journal naturally evolved into a three-way dialogue journal initiated by the intern with contributions from both the supervisor and mentor. Angela reflects on their use of the triad journal:

> I kind of wish we would have done this sooner. I think there are questions that I should ask her but I don't. But in the triad journals she can see my thinking coming out about children and situations. I think it is a good way for everyone to see what each other is thinking. I bring up questions and those bring up more thoughts for me, more things of concern. I think it is because I have a close relationship with her. (Angela, interview, 218-223)

Bridgett also shares the following thoughts about the journal as a forum for Angela to raise questions:

> You just learn so much about how they (the interns) are feeling about things. Even the fact that Angela and I are together all day, have conversations and visit, chit chat and everything else, it is still another way to get to know her, get to look at her thinking and see what she considers important. (Bridgett, interview B, 438-441)

Bridgett writes to Angela in the journal:

> Angela, I am so enjoying your journal. It's helping me to understand issues you feel are important. You share a wonderful variety of insights and from reading it I don't feel that the journal is a drudgery for you. I hope you are able to continue as your teaching load increases. (Bridgett, triad journal, 1/99)

Jerelyn Wallace (1989) who has also worked with a similar three-way dialogue journal describes the journal as a "forum for observations, questions, and reflections that chronicled the year's teaching practice as well as the evolving relationship between mentor and teacher candidate. Periodically, the university folks would jump into the conversation, adding their own responses" (p. 35). They found that, like Bridgett and Angela, many mentors viewed the dialogue journal as a tool:

> The exchange may take on a life of its own, become a welcomed place to record the joys and frustrations of teaching practice, and provide a forum through which communication among teacher candidates, mentors, and university colleagues is greatly enriched. Additionally, the journal is a reflective instrument, in both the long and short term, gives incredible insight into the process of the year - the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

> progress of students, personal growth as an educator, the evolution of relationships and connections all the way around. (Wallace, p. 35)

Because Bridgett and Angela are so focused on their teaching of the children during the day, dialogue journals provided a tool or space for reflection around questions of professional practice to occur.

Space to Improve

Space to improve is naturally created in Bridgett's kindergarten because of the opportunity to teach similar lessons in both the morning and afternoon:

> I think, for an intern, teaching in kindergarten is a wonderful experience because you can make that adjustment immediately and try again right away that same day. It gives you a lot more room for experimentation in working out your own teaching. (Bridgett, interview B, 539-543)

Bridgett believes that Angela will improve and retain more if she discovers it herself and that by trying, thinking, making adjustments, and trying again she will learn best. This is consistent with the notion of constructivist teacher education (Richardson, 1997) and the work of Joyce and Weil (1980) who believe ownership of a learning experience is enhanced when the learner experiences new information in a way that makes the learning theirs by discovery.

Angela shares how reflecting on her teacher lead to her improved practice in the afternoon:

> After the children would leave, we might talk about why I used the puppet in the morning and how that went and then why I didn't use the puppet in the afternoon... (Angela, interview, 112-114)

Bridgett also believes that their conversations following Angela's lessons provided a context for Angela to think about ways to improve.

Bridgett acknowledges how difficult it was for her to initially give Angela space to improve as she taught the afternoon class. This was particularly hard because Bridgett wanted Angela to feel successful and she felt like they were a challenging group of children. In fact, Bridgett often felt like she should jump in and help as evidenced in the following:

> My husband and I were talking and he said that he didn't know if I should be allowed to be a mentor if I am not allowing the intern to actually try out some strategies and not be there to try to fix things all of the time. He said that I didn't know what her class would be like next year and that I really wasn't helping her. I agreed and have tried to let Angela practice on her own. (Bridgett, interview B, 223-227)

Bridgett describes Angela's greatest challenge as classroom management and believes that the way she will get better is by having a *space to improve*. Bridgett's belief that Angela will learn most effectively by practicing is also consistent with Kolb's (1984) cognitive style model. Kolb's model "is based on Dewey's focus on experience-based learning, Lewin's focus on active learning, and Piaget's focus on intelligence as the result of the interaction of the person and environment" (p. 472). Angela's "learning by doing" represents these features and continues throughout the year. Bridgett provides her with the spaces to improve:

> As Angela moves through the year she is accepting more and more responsibility for the children. For me it is to help facilitate giving her more and more

> opportunities to teach…I just don't feel that I have that much to offer besides to give her opportunity. (Bridgett, interview A, 208-212)

Space to Celebrate

Bridgett recognizes Angela's many accomplishments and frequently takes time to celebrate her successes. Celebration as a learning space completes a cycle of learning that Bridgett believes is key to Angela's growth.

> Most of the time, Bridgett would ask me how things went and I would tell her I thought that they went ok. But then she would say I think it went great and then she would talk about why it was so successful. (Angela, interview, 108-111)

Angela also has learned to celebrate her own growth as she reflects in her own journal:

> My relationship with my mentor is growing stronger everyday. I feel that my ideas are really valued and that my mentor has placed a lot of confidence in me.

In responding to that entry Bridgett adds, "Absolutely!" (Triad Journal, 2/99) Another example of celebration is the enthusiasm that Bridgett shows for Angela's teaching. She frequently shares with Angela's supervisor well designed and implemented lessons or highlights the special skills that Angela brings to her work with children. Angela feels Bridgett's enthusiasm as evidenced in the following:

> Bridgett really shows enthusiasm for my lessons. She is always pushing me to my fullest potential and then helping me see my successes. (Angela, interview, 23-25)

Angela's confidence and experience of success in her teaching contributes to her learning, makes her feel like a teacher, and leads to future learning as the cycle begins again. Figure 1

summarizes the cycle of spaces Bridgett has created to nurture Angela's professional growth. As seen in the figure, celebration links back to "being a teacher" and the notion of efficacy. By beginning and ending the cycle with a *space to be*, Angela continues to approach her work confidently as a professional and a life-long learner.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

A Gardener's Artistic Approach to Mentoring

Bridgett acts as a gardener as she cultivates the space by planting the seeds in fertile soil, watering the plants when necessary, and providing a context where her intern grow. As the year progresses, she builds a relationship with Angela and provides Angela with multiple spaces to develop professional eyes. These professional eyes are ways that both Bridgett and Angela come to know their work and the children. Bridgett adopts an organic frame of mind as she mentors Angela. This organic frame of mind is similar to that discussed by Garman (1982):

> A heightened sense of collegiality is possible when I can imagine myself as a member of an organic unit, when the distinction between supervisor and teacher is less discernable and I can transcend my conventional role status... As an organic member I'm aware of the individual and collective possibilities when members are involved in the flow of the experience toward common goals. As a member of an organic unit I am active and reactive, inductive and productive during the life of the experience. I can be most effective when I imagine how other members might contribute. I'm able to see that much of the activity and results of the

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

> involvement will unfold in a manner that will lead to new and unpredictable states. I can be energized by seeing others and myself make important contributions, discovering potential we never imagined ourselves. (p. 42)

Because Bridgett recognizes and values Angela's professional eyes, Bridgett uses this organic frame and provides space for Angela to grow in her own unique directions. Bridgett recognizes Angela as a colleague and as a result Bridgett does not expect nor does she want Angela to replicate her own practices. In fact, Bridgett wants Angela to use the spaces to develop her own teaching self.

Eisner (1982) describes an artistic approach to supervision that shares commonalties with Bridgett's cycle of mentoring spaces, allowing Angela to unfold her teaching practice in her own unique ways. Eisner provides a metaphorical example:

> Consider the work of Jacqueline DuPre coaching students playing the cello or Jascha Heifetz's master classes in violin at UCLA…Both DuPre and Heifetz have developed an acute ability to hear what is being played. Now this might seem to some a simple and straightforward task. It is not. To hear the subtleties of complex musical passages, the various possibilities of vibrato or pizzicato, the expressive contours of a slow, mordent tremolo requires what I have referred to in the literature as connoisseurship. Both DuPre and Heifetz are able to hear, not merely listen, to music. This accomplishment is as critical to the supervisor as it is to the music coach. The forms of awareness that the connoisseur achieves provide the basis for subsequent action. What he or she hears makes it possible to

> comment, to offer advice, to reflect back to the performer what has been performed…(p.60)

Bridgett's approach to mentoring emphasizes hearing those complex musical passages as Angela works with the students in her classroom. She does this by heightening her awareness of Angela's strengths and weaknesses and by looking carefully and thoughtfully at her work. In response, Bridgett then provides the appropriate learning context for Angela. Creating these spaces becomes Bridgett's work as a mentor.

Eisner (1982) continues along this same theme as he discusses the uniqueness that each musician brings to her work:

> But there is more. Every performer may be said to have a characteristic mode of expression and the first-rate supervisor or music coach is able to recognize this mode and help the performer move in the direction he or she is "by nature" inclined. Glenn Gould's crisp and methodical handling of the piano is fundamentally different from the romanticism displayed by Rubinstein. It would, I think, be a disservice to try to move Gould in Rubinstein's direction, or Rubinstein in Gould's. (p.60)

Similarly, Bridgett recognizes Angela's unique strengths and talents using these as opportunities to help Angela "be" or "feel" like a teacher and "celebrate" those successful teaching moments. Bridgett defines some of Angela's talents as she works and learns with the children:

> I think her greatest strength is easily her creativity. I know she has had a lot of previous experience helping in classrooms…I am not sure that she didn't actually enter the internship program a couple of steps ahead of what I would picture as a

> typical intern… She came knowing what it is all about an she is so creative and she thinks and adjusts very well to the moment and to the needs of the kids … and the flow of the lesson….She understands the way children learn. She is relaxed in the classroom and she has a lot of other areas that she is really good at. (Bridgett, interview B, 60-76).

Eisner (1982) continues his focus on the connoisseur of teaching when he asks:

> What is the analogy to teaching? Simply this: teachers, too, are differentiated by their style and by their particular strengths. Artistically -oriented supervision would recognize this style and try to help the teacher exploit it by strengthening the positive directions already taken… (p. 60)

Bridgett's approach to mentoring shares this element of the "artistic approach to supervision." In a journal written by Bridgett at the end of the year:

> As for my impression of the role of a mentor, I find that it has evolved. Of course the mentor needs to be there to help the intern have many divergent teaching experiences with students, to guide the intern through typical school situations, to help facilitate positive teaching experiences, to give the intern opportunities to play on his/her strengths and creativity, and feel safe/comfortable in taking risks…Through facilitating, the intern has a chance to find his/her own understanding about children and personal teaching style, a style that works best for the intern. The style may not be my own, but the intern needs to be able to feel the freedom to find what works for him/her. I think if there is too much "see

> what I do" on the part of the mentor it can be stifling to the intern's educational development. (Bridgett, Journal Entry, 4/99)

Bridgett clearly celebrates Angela's willingness to explore her own work as a teacher. Eisner concludes with the following metaphor:

> The ability to appreciate such qualities requires access to the process. In the context of music, both DuPre and Heifetz sit with the performer and comment on what they hear. Furthermore, they hear the performer repeatedly over a period of several months. Thus they can compare what they are hearing to what they have heard. This is no small advantage since the performances of the past do much to establish the reasonable parameters for the present criticism. How far and how fast one can move depends on where one starts and what the prior rate has been. (p. 61)

This notion of mentoring over time connects to both the importance of the interpersonal relationships developed through the year long internship as well as Garman's (1989) description of the "unfolding lesson" which emphasizes understanding learning and teaching over time. Relationships take time to develop and as evidenced in this case they clearly pay off. Bridgett's work with Angela focuses on the "seeing of the teaching" and the "knowing of the intern" over the course of a full year much like Eisner describes the hearing of the music over time. Since watching and nurturing children's growth over the course of a school year is also what Bridgett does as she works with the children in her kindergarten, teaching her intern is really not so different from teaching her children (Silva, 2000).

This final piece of data attests to the effectiveness of Bridgett's cycle of mentoring spaces. In fact, what better way to end this story than to share Angela's reflections on the year. Angela tells her story as a student of teaching in ways that validate, triangulate, and celebrate Bridgett's work within her garden and her artistic approach to mentoring. This story, written by Angela and shared in the form of a letter to a future intern, raises, honors, and authenticates Bridgett's work. What do we know about Bridgett as a mentor teacher?

Angela's Letter

May 25, 1999

Dear Interns for 1999-2000,

As I am completing the last few weeks of my yearlong internship, I want to take the time to reflect on my year and offer a few words of advice for your year. First, I will list ways in which this internship impacted my life:

I experienced a tremendous amount of GROWTH (growth in reflecting upon my own teaching, growth in reflecting on teaching practices, growth in professionalism, growth in communication, growth in my ability to try out new ideas and techniques, growth in inquiring into my own classroom happenings, growth in communicating about my teaching beliefs.)

I was able to explore and experiment with different teaching styles and methods, in order to find a style that matches my very own teaching philosophy and one that I feel comfortable using!

I gained a tremendous amount of pride and confidence in myself, my own abilities, my profession. I know that teaching is, without a doubt, the profession where I belong. I can not imagine any other choice but to TEACH! This internship has given me a renewed sense of passion for what I do. What I do is reach out to young individuals everyday, letting them know how important they are, and how much I value their lifelong growth and learning. Knowing that makes my job one of the most important jobs on earth.

I met and became close with a terrific group of people. The connections, relationships, and friendships that I have formed with my mentor, my fellow interns, my PDA's, my faculty and administration within the entire PDS will last a lifetime.

I formed a very open, trusting, caring, relationship with my mentor. She has become one of the most influential people in my life. I owe so much to her for allowing me to

enter her classroom, to find my own space and style, to take risks, to overcome failures, and most importantly, to learn what it means to be a successful teacher!

As you enter your internship next fall, keep these bits of advice in mind. Be yourself at all times. Don't let the little things get you down. Always keep your overall experience and your goals in mind. Talk with, observe, ask questions of, and work with all the teachers that you can. You are so lucky to be working with the great teachers in this district. Plan with, work with, observe your fellow interns. By bouncing ideas and questions off of each other, you will come up with ideas that you never imagined! Never be afraid to put forth your own ideas and interests. The more you enjoy and are excited about what you are doing and teaching, the more excited your students will be! Show your strengths, as they will give you the confidence to try new ideas. Learn from and reflect on your mistakes. They will help you see how to or how not to do something a second time! But do not dwell on them! Always be an active observer within your classroom. Right from the start it will allow you to get to know your students, not just as a whole, but more importantly as individuals. The more you know about the individuals within your classroom, the more able you will be to meet their needs as a whole!

I wish you the best for next year! I hope the internship brings as much growth and experience to your lives and your professionalism as it did for mine!

Sincerely,
Angela

Discussion

What does this cycle of spaces offer other mentors interested in facilitating prospective teacher growth? Bridgett's work portrays how cultivating a caring context for her intern leads to professional growth and an intern's ability to take responsibility for her own learning. She creates this context by offering Angela a series of five spaces- the space to be, the space to explore, the space to raise questions, the space to improve, and the space to celebrate. In combination, these spaces encouraged Angela to assume a professional stance to her practice and in this case these spaces led to the development of a fine new teacher.

But what about other cases? Many questions about mentoring remain. For example, what type of prospective teachers have the capacity to thrive in this type of context? What happens if a prospective teacher can not take control of the learning process? What about a prospective teacher who doesn't raise professional questions? Similarly, do all mentors have the capacity to provide these spaces? And what are the implications for those who wish to mentor that can't provide these spaces? How does a mentor use these spaces to adapt her mentoring in response to the needs of the prospective teacher? Lastly, this study raises the question of responsibility. Is there a moral basis of mentoring that necessitates the mentor's creation of a caring context for prospective teacher growth? Bridgett's work suggests that creating a caring context of mentoring spaces is a part of the moral basis of mentoring.

Figure 1. Bridgett's Cycle of Mentoring Spaces